

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Monday, 11 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. MONGBE

(Benin)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.5
5 November 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) said that his delegation unreservedly endorsed the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77. Despite the hopes that had been aroused by the end of the cold war, the economic relations between the developed and developing countries were still characterized by inequalities and imbalances which, combined with the prolonged recession in the developed countries and the uncertainties arising from the changes that had taken place in the international system, exacerbated the difficulties faced by the developing countries, particularly those in Africa.

2. The external debt burden of the developing countries was steadily increasing and the ratios between debt and gross national product (GNP) or exports were highest in Africa. Debt servicing constituted a serious obstacle to growth and development in third world countries, since it absorbed a significant portion of the limited domestic and external resources of the debtor countries. Given the fact that they were selective, partial and ad hoc, recent initiatives aimed at debt alleviation or conversion had had only limited success. It was therefore essential and urgent that the external debt problem should be addressed within the framework of a global initiative, so that available resources and liquidity could be used to promote economic recovery and growth.

3. Despite the positive balance recorded in the previous two years, the transfer of resources had been unequally distributed. Developing countries as a whole, particularly those in Africa, had not benefited and future trends in distribution remained uncertain. The international financial and monetary system would benefit from greater stability and streamlining in order to attract more significant amounts of capital and direct investments. For their part, the developed countries should make the necessary efforts to promote adequate resource flows and to increase their official development assistance to the internationally agreed level of 0.7 per cent of GNP. In that connection, he fully endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the convening of an international conference on the financing of development.

4. The instability of international trade underscored the increasing marginalization of the developing countries, which was a consequence both of the steady decline in commodity prices and the severe restrictions placed on access to the markets of the developed countries. The measures which had been agreed upon at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) should therefore be implemented as a matter of priority and emphasis should be placed on the establishment of an international trading system that was regulated, transparent and non-discriminatory. Every effort should be made to achieve as early as possible a balanced and equitable conclusion to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Steps should also be taken to promote the consultations agreed upon at Cartagena concerning the possibility of convening an international conference on commodities, which could provide an opportunity for producer and consumer countries to devise practical mechanisms to set more remunerative prices for commodities and regulate the orderly evolution of prices.

(Mr. Lamamra, Algeria)

5. Foremost among the commitments undertaken in Agenda 21 was the transfer of additional resources and technologies to developing countries. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the preparation of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States were clear indications that qualitative progress was being made. Those achievements should be consolidated with the conclusion, within the time-limit set by the General Assembly, of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. Negotiations should also continue on the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility in order to transform it into an institution which would ensure the full and unrestricted participation of all developing countries.

6. International economic problems could be resolved only through sincere cooperation and constructive dialogue based on interdependence, mutual interest and shared responsibility, since, by laying the foundations for joint methods for the regulation and functioning of the world economy, a collective effort of that nature could contribute to the emergence of a just and equitable international economic order. The agenda for development would be a necessary complement to the Agenda for Peace. Based on the objectives of the commitments set forth in various United Nations agreements, in particular, Agenda 21, and on the progress already made, the agenda for development should contain innovative proposals aimed at promoting an economic and social development that was equitably shared among all peoples.

7. Following the rapid and far-reaching upheavals and changes that had taken place in international relations, the Organization must adapt its structures and methods of operation. The process of the restructuring and revitalization of the economic, social and related sectors should be completed without delay, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/264, and adequate mechanisms must be put in place to ensure the sustained, predictable and guaranteed financing of operational activities for development. In order to ensure success, it was important to strengthen the role of the resident coordinators by focusing strictly on development objectives and by enhancing the effectiveness and complementarity of the efforts made on behalf of the host countries.

8. Now that a conceptual breakthrough had been achieved at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, which had finally seen the international community rally around the right to development, the time had come to embark on a collective endeavour whose full scope and thrust should reflect the will of the peoples of the United Nations to have recourse to international institutions to promote the economic and social progress of all peoples.

9. Mr. KEATING (New Zealand) said that, while peace, development and democracy were mutually reinforcing, discussions in the United Nations focused on each component separately, thus overlooking their linkages. The role of the United Nations in the economic, social and development sectors should be rethought; the prospects for reform in that area were greater than ever. The new possibilities for dialogue in the economic and development field should be turned to good use; to that end, the message by the Non-Aligned Movement to the seven major industrialized countries, entitled "An Invitation to Dialogue", proposed new terms based on mutual interest and shared responsibilities.

/...

(Mr. Keating, New Zealand)

10. The United Nations was better equipped than the sectoral and non-universal organizations to provide a unique forum for discussions of the interlinkages between human aspirations for peace, respect for the individual, economic well-being and the preservation of a safe and clean environment. In the area of the environment, it was particularly well placed to take a leadership role in sectors where policies still remained to be defined.

11. In 1992, during its triennial review of operational activities, the Second Committee had re-examined the arrangements for providing development assistance in the field. It had made certain important changes which should be followed up, such as those relating to country strategy notes and the overall management process for the implementation of resolution 47/199. The agenda for development, to be defined by the Secretary-General, would undoubtedly provide an opportunity to discuss and refine the role of the United Nations in promoting sustainable development, in close cooperation with international financial and economic institutions.

12. The ultimate goal of the reform process was to make the best possible use of the Organization's resources. In the social and economic sectors, operations should be rationalized and efforts should be made to avoid duplication where other bodies were better equipped for certain debates and activities. Agreement was very close on a restructuring package which would significantly improve the modus operandi, particularly in the area of development policy formulation. New Zealand attached great importance to preparations for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and to the work of the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. In addition, on the subject of fishing, great vigilance must continue to be exercised regarding the implementation of resolutions on drift-net fishing.

13. New Zealand was strongly committed to the swift conclusion of the multilateral trade negotiations in the Uruguay Round, which, given the current gloomy world picture, was of critical importance to everyone. Many developing countries preferred trade to aid and, given the real economic difficulties experienced by donor countries, it could not be assumed that aid transfers were in themselves sufficient to promote rapid progress in sustainable human development. While many countries in Central Europe, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere, including New Zealand, had undertaken significant unilateral initiatives to reform, liberalize and stimulate their economies, it would be unfortunate if the fruits of those often hard-won economic reforms were not complemented by effective trade liberalization regulations. Since the Uruguay Round had been launched, many deadlines had come and gone, but the moment had come to choose between confrontation or cooperation in international trade. If the negotiations were not concluded by 15 December, there were grounds to believe that the package of measures, poorly assembled as it was, might fall apart and that the real opportunity which existed to strengthen the multilateral trading system and thus substantially boost the world economy would be lost. Furthermore, if the negotiations were to be successfully concluded, the package must be a substantial one covering all sectors, with agriculture as its cornerstone. It should be borne in mind, however, that all countries must be in a position to reap benefits from the agreement that would ultimately be concluded.

14. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) was convinced of the need to rationalize the work of the Second Committee, in terms of both form and substance. In order to respond to critics who deplored the stagnation of the Committee's work and to take better advantage of the time and resources at its disposal, it should consolidate consideration of several agenda items and update the agenda to take into account the new realities of the post-cold war era. In restructuring and revitalizing the organs of the United Nations, the example of modernization and efficiency offered by some countries, including Chile, should be followed. The restructuring in the economic, social and related fields was taking much longer than planned, but it should be possible to reach a consensus text before the end of the year, in the light of the decisions reached by the Economic and Social Council at its latest session. It was important, however, not to underestimate the complexity of the process, which accounted for the difficulties encountered, and it would be unwise to arrive at the next session of the Economic and Social Council without new attitudes and a new working method.

15. He warned that the possible failure of the Uruguay Round was cause for concern, since it would result in a resurgence of protectionism with incalculable consequences. The developing countries would be the ones to suffer the most from a trade war, which would nullify any prospects for the opening of markets. The sacrifices which had been made and the political costs incurred thus far would all have been in vain.

16. The notion that the fate of international trade could be linked to internal political vicissitudes and to the specific economic needs of certain minorities should be rejected. It was unacceptable that negotiations of the scope of the Uruguay Round should be deadlocked by the interplay of interests of a few thousand inefficient farmers, with a consequent recrudescence of problems for billions of people all over the world.

17. The changes in the world and the phenomenon of the globalization of the economy exposed all countries to a new dynamic of international relations which unmistakably indicated the emergence of a new understanding of politics and the advent of a coordinated approach to the solution of the increasingly severe problems facing the world. Those problems were universal and required collective solutions. Two such problems were unemployment and poverty, which were no longer the exclusive scourges of the developing world but increasingly affected the industrialized countries as well. At the Economic Summit of the seven major industrialized countries, held at Tokyo in 1993, the figure of 23 million unemployed in those countries had been cited; among job-creation measures, mention had been made of structural reforms to improve the efficiency of markets, especially labour markets. Emphasis at the Summit in Tokyo had also been placed on the need for a rapid reduction in international interest rates, for a prompt conclusion to the Uruguay Round, for a cut in subsidies and for efforts to enhance efficiency in financial markets. Those objectives were urgent, since unemployment could only exacerbate poverty and, if it continued to grow, the extensive social security systems of the industrialized countries would buckle under the burden of a growing number of requests for assistance.

18. Current problems could therefore only be solved through a revitalization of the economy, which was impossible without guaranteeing freedom of international trade. Only an increase in trade would make possible the progressive

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

integration of the large numbers of impoverished people, in order to transform them into real consumers and thus revitalize the world economy. In order to meet the requirements of the population between 1993 and the end of the millennium, the developing world would, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), need to create 700 million new jobs in seven years. Development would be best promoted by the existence of fair, transparent, permanent and properly respected international trade regulations, as the developing countries incurred losses equivalent to ten times their total international development assistance (IDA) for the simple reason that the entry of their products into the markets of the industrialized countries was subject to arbitrary restrictions. He was convinced that the aspirations and goals set forth at the Economic Summit of the seven major industrialized countries and the aspirations of the developing countries in the economic field showed a remarkable similarity, which was bound to promote the implementation of joint action. It was there that the Second Committee had a special role to play.

19. Mr. WOON (Malaysia) said that the intense preoccupation of the United Nations with political and security issues ought not to imperil the economic agenda, since peace and prosperity were indivisible. Indeed, the debate on development issues was even more critical at a time when the cold war had ended and the global economy was stagnating. Except for a few developing countries in Eastern Asia which were experiencing a respectable growth rate, the future prospects of developing countries remained uncertain.

20. The notion of global economic management meant in effect that the global economic process was affected more by the decisions of the seven major industrialized countries than by those of the United Nations.

21. The United Nations could, however, play an important role in combating global economic stagnation by building consensus and expressing commitments. But such a consensus could produce results only if Governments, the Bretton Woods institutions and transnational corporations refrained from pursuing only their own objectives and priorities to the detriment of global interests.

22. The idea of macroeconomic policy coordination was also complicated, since the workings of the market were often distorted and disrupted and, in the absence of an effective mechanism for regulation and adjustment, a state of paralysis reigned.

23. The leaders of the major developed countries should endeavour to set their economies back on the path of growth by eliminating distortions, doing away with the costly subsidies through which they vainly attempted to protect their agricultural sector, expanding their public sector expenditure programmes on infrastructure and increasing their investments abroad. That would create employment and increase consumer spending. As UNCTAD had stated in its 1993 report, the willingness to make sacrifices and to take risks for long-term benefits was vital.

24. Given the importance of the economic agenda, the Uruguay Round should be concluded without any further delay and international economic cooperation should be redefined in more equitable and effective terms in the true spirit of global partnership.

(Mr. Woon, Malaysia)

25. Although the various meetings and conferences to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (including the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the preparatory meeting for a Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States) were interesting initiatives, the commitments made by Heads of State or Government at the Rio Summit had still not yielded tangible results owing to a lack of resources. However, the creation by the Commission on Sustainable Development of ad hoc working groups on finance and technology, which would meet in February or March 1994, was a welcome exception.

26. A consensus should shortly be reached on the revitalization of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations; a strengthened structure, accompanied by increased resources, should increase the ability of United Nations funds and programmes to develop their operational activities. The strengthening of the coordinating function of the Economic and Social Council should further enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities for development. He referred to the confusion that resulted from a multitude of bodies dealing with science and technology for development and the need to rationalize and coordinate their work.

27. Although the agenda for international development cooperation was expanding, the means of implementation were severely lacking, even in the case of such a positive initiative as the Global Environment Facility. It was a great pity that, because of a lack of resources, the various global initiatives in that field seemed doomed to failure.

28. Mr. DIMITROV (Bulgaria) said that his country supported the endeavours of the United Nations to seek a greater role in peace-keeping and to nationalize its social and economic sectors. Since its creation, the United Nations had been a unique international body, where all issues could be approached in an integrated manner. Its responsibilities and its role were therefore greater than ever at a time when the international community was faced with new opportunities, owing to the end of the cold war, but also with new challenges and threats.

29. The prospects for a more stable and just world depended to a large extent on the state of the world economy. As could be seen from the World Economic Survey, 1993, the current situation was hardly reassuring. Although some developing countries showed positive economic growth, the continued weakness of the industrially developed economies, the difficulties experienced by a large number of developing countries and the persisting negative trends in most of the economies in transition exerted a detrimental influence on the overall international economic environment.

30. In view of the poverty, underdevelopment, epidemics and famine which were rampant in many parts of the world, it was essential to define a new concept of development. The notion of sustainable development, incorporated in Agenda 21, was a step in the right direction; the World Summit for Social Development, as well as other forthcoming conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development, should further contribute to that end. The debates on the agenda for development, to be submitted by the Secretary-General, should also advance the process. The successful conclusion of the multilateral trade

/...

(Mr. Dimitrov, Bulgaria)

negotiations of the Uruguay Round was essential for the revitalization of international trade.

31. The successful integration of the countries in transition into the world economy, which should have a positive effect on world trade, economic growth and development, remained one of the main tasks of the current decade. While the prime responsibility for the reforms lay with the Governments and peoples of those countries, the complexity of the economic reforms and the restructuring showed that the international community would have to provide significant support. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should intensify their activities aimed at assisting the countries in transition: much remained to be done, in particular to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial institutions.

32. Bulgaria attached great importance to its participation in multilateral economic cooperation, such as its free-trade agreement with the States members of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), the recent agreement of association with the European Community and the current negotiations on association with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

33. The Bulgarian Government had already taken steps to bring the functioning of the economy and trade policy into line with the principles and rules of GATT. The process of privatization had started, but the country was still experiencing severe difficulties - a sudden drop in production, mounting unemployment, a sharp contraction of capital investment and internal demand, and a heavy foreign debt burden - resulting in part from the strict implementation of the economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As the President of the Republic of Bulgaria had pointed out in his address to the General Assembly, the embargo had closed Bulgaria's direct route to the markets of Western Europe and the country had consequently suffered enormous losses which jeopardized the democratic process and even social peace.

34. He therefore appealed to the United Nations and the multilateral financial institutions to take appropriate measures to ease Bulgaria's economic hardships. His delegation intended to introduce a specific proposal on the matter. It also declared its readiness to participate fully in the deliberations on all the items on the agenda.

35. Mr. LIL Zhoaxing (China) said that, while the prospects for peace were better of late, at the same time many contradictions were emerging that had long been hidden.

36. Although the cold war had ended, inequities and imbalances in the structure of the world economy were increasing and the gap between North and South was widening every day. While most developing countries continued to face tremendous difficulties, some developed countries had unfortunately decided to pursue more inward-looking policies and to adopt protectionist measures that were impeding the recovery of the world economy. That explained the current stalemate at the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Moreover, because of the decline in official development assistance (ODA) and the debt burden which continued to weigh heavily on low-income countries, the resources of the developing countries were shrinking. Furthermore, stringent conditions

(Mr. Lil Zhoaxing, China)

were frequently attached to development assistance; that constituted external intervention in the internal affairs of developing countries.

37. In the United Nations system, peace-keeping operations and the resources allocated to them had to a large extent eclipsed the silent crisis which affected the developing countries. Work towards the attainment of the goals set in Agenda 21 had hardly begun owing to the failure of States to fulfil their commitments with respect to financial resources and the transfer of technology. The new partnership for international development remained a dead letter.

38. Peace and development were closely linked: economic development was just as impossible without peace and stability as were peace and stability without economic development. The best route to economic revitalization lay in self-reliance. In that connection, it was encouraging to note that the developing countries were striving to restructure their economies, to create market economies, to open their markets and to improve the investment climate. Nevertheless, the globalization of the world economy and general economic interdependence made it impossible for a country to achieve prosperity on its own. A new international economic and political order, based on stability, justice and equality, was needed. The developed countries should adopt more enlightened policies, strengthen coordination of their macroeconomic policies and fulfil their commitments. That would help the developing countries to achieve their objectives and would at the same time constitute a long-term investment.

39. It was to be hoped that in his report on the agenda for development, the Secretary-General would take full account of current needs and put forward recommendations for the further implementation of the plans formulated by the United Nations in the development field, and that the debate on that report in the Second Committee during the current session would be lively and productive.

40. The United Nations should improve its policy coordination in the social and economic fields and increase its funding for operational activities since the shortage of financial resources reduced the role of the United Nations in the economic field and damaged its image.

41. There were more than one billion people living in poverty in the world, 630 million of whom lived in Asia, and the most urgent task was to meet their basic needs. As long as those people suffered from starvation, illiteracy and disease, talk of other rights, such as democracy and freedom, not to mention participation in development, would be meaningless.

42. It was essential to enhance the international community's awareness of those challenges if agreement was to be translated into action. It was to be hoped that, in preparing for the World Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, the issue of economic and social development would be addressed in its entirety and that the Commission on Sustainable Development would adopt action-oriented measures to increase financial resources and the transfer of technology so that international cooperation in the fields of environment and development would become a reality.

(Mr. Lil Zhoaxing, China)

43. The world was made up of more than 180 countries with different social systems, traditions, ideologies and religious beliefs. It was important to recognize the sovereignty of each of those countries to choose its own path to development and its own economic model, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. To impose a particular economic model or to use official development assistance as a means of leverage exerting pressure for political purposes would not only impede the efforts of States to achieve prosperity, but also harm the growth of the world economy.

44. With its economy currently in full expansion, China could feed a population which accounted for one fifth of the population of the planet and provide it with a decent standard of living. China was also trying to ensure continued economic growth through structural adjustment policies. Its economic strength, however, should not be overestimated: development remained uneven in many regions and the country's economic foundation was still weak. Decades of work would be necessary before China would become a developed country. With its political stability and its rapid economic growth, however, China stood ready to develop and strengthen its friendly cooperation with the other countries of the world and to contribute to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of global prosperity.

45. Mrs. AMERASEKARE (Sri Lanka) noted that recent changes in the global economic and political situation had created new opportunities for the international community. Global economic recovery, however, was not proceeding at a sufficiently rapid pace, the rate of growth of world output having increased only modestly from 0.5 per cent in 1991 to 1.75 per cent in 1992. For many developing countries, especially some African countries, the standard of living had continued to decline and, as UNDP indicated in its UNDP Human Development Report for 1993, almost one fifth of the world's population was living in poverty.

46. Since 1989, some developing countries had maintained economic growth rates of 3.5 per cent; that was encouraging, but it should be kept in mind that the economic level of those countries had been extremely weak at the outset. Economic problems were not confined to the South: while poverty was gaining ground in the developing countries, the industrialized countries were caught in the grip of rising unemployment.

47. Despite those continuing difficulties, recent economic and political changes offered hope for global economic growth, provided the world community pursued a cooperative growth strategy. The current difficulties owed much to the lack of appropriate macroeconomic policies that went beyond strictly national considerations. In order to put an end to continuing economic stagnation, further measures must be taken to expand international trade and take advantage of the new opportunities for cooperation for development. Sustainable development required all countries to combine their efforts and to work together. A new development compact between North and South was essential. A partnership between countries was vital if the international community was to build upon what had been achieved so far as a result of the Earth Summit held in 1992 and the World Summit for Children held in 1990.

(Mrs. Amerasekare, Sri Lanka)

48. The United Nations was currently preparing for a third summit, the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the purpose of which was to prepare a plan of action for social development. Only through a cooperative strategy could the international community realize the objectives that it had set for itself. It must be understood that peace, security and prosperity were interdependent objectives and could be achieved only through a new partnership - a new development compact between the developed and the developing countries. The essential elements were human resources development, fiscal and trade policies conducive to international trade, structural adjustments and sustainable use of the earth's resources.

49. It was important to realize that resources were under unprecedented stress and that no target could be achieved unless human resources development was deliberately emphasized. The goal of the new development compact between the developed and the developing countries should be to allocate 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of the budget of developing countries to human resources development.

50. The quality of life in some countries was high despite their low per capita income. Sri Lanka, which had only just attained a per capita income of US\$ 470, had achieved high performance in the area of human resources development. The current trend towards reducing ODA to countries that had successful human resources development policies could adversely affect those countries, because they needed continued assistance in order to sustain their efforts.

51. Two fundamental requirements for achieving sustainable development in the developing world were capital and technology. Mr. Grant, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, had recently stated that, to provide every man, woman and child with adequate food, clean water, primary health care and basic education by the year 2000, it would be necessary to spend an additional US\$ 25 billion a year and to do so before population growth decreased the impact of the effort. The ODA requirement for sustainable development was estimated at US\$ 125 billion a year, or more than double the 1993 ODA level.

52. One could not expect the substantial capital sums required for sustainable development to come only from ODA and domestic savings. They would have to be provided partly from international trade and private capital markets. It was essential for developed countries to follow policies that would facilitate the growth of international trade. Substantial sums were available in private capital markets, but developing countries did not have access to them owing to high interest rates and a lack of collateral. A collective guarantee by international donor countries and an interest subsidy would bring those funds within the reach of developing countries.

53. The United Nations had a vital role to play in promoting international cooperation to achieve sustainable development. For that reason, it should be strengthened, and its restructuring for efficiency and transparency was welcome.

54. In the view of her delegation, the agenda for development was as important as the Agenda for Peace, because peace and development were interdependent.

/...

55. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said he would confine his remarks to certain points, since Indonesia's views had been duly expressed in the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

56. The world economic situation had shown little or no improvement. In a climate of deep recession and stagnation, the economic performance of the rich countries had been generally poor. That poor performance had had severe consequences for most developing countries, especially those in Africa, which suffered from acute market constraints, declining prices for primary commodities and excessive debt burdens.

57. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General had rightly stressed that economic development was multifaceted, involving political, social, educational and environmental dimensions, and that it therefore called for an integrated approach. Indonesia had always recognized that peace, security and stability were inextricably linked to economic well-being. There could be no development without democracy, and Indonesia had always targeted the development of the full human being. Its five-year development plans were always based on three complementary objectives: growth, stability and equity.

58. Nevertheless, democracy, like development, could be neither instantaneous nor artificially imposed from the outside. It must be achieved gradually and must take into account the norms and traditions of each country. Indonesia was therefore pleased that the agenda for development was aimed essentially at promoting international cooperation for development. That implied strengthening the role of the United Nations and reactivating the North-South dialogue.

59. He also stressed the importance of democratizing international economic relations at the global level or, in other words, eliminating the widening gap between the richest and the poorest countries. In an increasingly interdependent world, key problems had become complex, and it was necessary to address them comprehensively and globally. A piece-meal, unilateral or regional approach was inadequate. The only solution was international cooperation, and reactivating the North-South dialogue was imperative.

60. For that reason, the Non-Aligned Movement had developed a new approach to discussions with the North on key issues of development and international relations. The Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement had invited the Chairman and leaders of the Group of Seven to engage in a dialogue with the countries of the South. At the Tokyo Economic Summit, the Group of Seven had responded positively, and the Chairmen of the Group of Seven and the Non-Aligned Movement had expressed their willingness to pursue a comprehensive approach to the issues of trade, investment and debt strategies. It was the duty of the Committee to consider that issue thoroughly so that it could take a position in favour of such dialogue. A draft resolution should be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, and all countries, both developed and developing, should unite behind that initiative. However, there was manifestly no spirit of cooperation on many important issues.

61. That spirit was particularly needed if the Uruguay Round of GATT was to be concluded successfully. A balanced conclusion implied that the interests of all

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

countries should be taken into account and, specifically, that every effort should be made to give developing countries greater access to international markets by checking protectionism. If the round failed, countries would be tempted to adopt unilateral, bilateral or regional solutions to trade problems.

62. For its part, Indonesia, like many developing countries, had unilaterally reduced many trade barriers and deregulated much of its economy in order to attract foreign investment and facilitate trade, unfortunately with no result. It therefore called on the major economic Powers of the North expeditiously to resolve their bilateral differences, which were largely responsible for the stalled round. The principle of special and differential treatment should be upheld. It was also necessary for the developed countries to keep the commitments they had made at the eighth session of UNCTAD.

63. A most disturbing question confronting the developing countries was that of excessive indebtedness. To solve the debt problem, the international community should continue to seek a coordinated approach, involving debtor and creditor countries as well as international financial institutions. The solution should be comprehensive, equitable and development-oriented. The Non-Aligned Movement considered it necessary to organize an international conference on the financing of development. For its part, Indonesia, as Chairman of the Movement, was planning to hold a meeting in the near future to find ways and means for resolving the debt problem, particularly of the least developed countries.

64. In a rapidly changing world, the restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social fields was an urgent necessity. It was regrettable that the General Assembly had been unable to reach a consensus on the question at its forty-seventh session. Yet, the international community must persist in such efforts if the United Nations was to play its role as the central forum for promoting international cooperation. It was also important to maximize the effectiveness of operational activities for development, particularly in view of the dire need for technical assistance and the declining level of available resources. The international community must ensure a substantial increase in resources for operational activities on a predictable and continuous basis.

65. Another central component of development was that of population. Given the increase in the world's population, the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo, assumed even greater importance. The complex linkage between rapid population growth, poverty and environmental degradation was increasingly being recognized. At the Conference those problems could be addressed in an integrated manner. Indonesia attached great importance to the Conference, and, would hold a ministerial meeting on population and development in November 1993 in Bali.

66. Another important factor linked to development was that of environmental degradation. The euphoria attached to the adoption of Agenda 21 had quickly dissipated in the face of the shortage of financial and technological assistance. Indonesia welcomed the establishment of the two inter-sessional working groups to specifically address those two central questions.

67. All those problems had a common thread, namely, the indispensability, for their resolution, of international cooperation for development. The agenda for

/...

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

development and the North-South dialogue should help chart the way forward for shaping a new world order and for achieving the goals of peace, development and democracy.

68. Mr. THAKUR (India) said that, as virtually all the preceding speakers had emphasized, the prospects for global economic recovery were uncertain. Those from whom the developing countries had expected support - through better terms of trade, investment, access to markets, access to technology on a non-discriminatory and preferred basis, and availability of concessional financing - appeared to be preoccupied with their own problems of unemployment, stagnation in investment, financial instability and trade disputes. They were also concentrating more and more on social issues, leaving development to the non-private sector. The developing countries had hoped that, with the end of the cold war, attention would be more effectively focused on development, and that resources would be released from the staggering expenditure on armaments and diverted to improving the social and economic situation of the vast majority of humankind. Economic, administrative and political reforms in the developing countries would not by themselves alter the picture. It could no longer be said that sustained underdevelopment was due to policies that did not allow market signals to operate and entrepreneurship to flourish. In fact, most developing countries had adopted reforms that allowed much greater freedom for the private sector; such reforms had made them even more dependent on the vagaries of the international economic environment. The Second Committee must address the question of whether adequate efforts were being made to minimize the impact of uncertainties on the increasingly open and vulnerable economies of the developing countries.

69. India, for its part, had undertaken far-reaching reforms which cut through various sectors of the economy and were oriented towards deregulation, privatization, liberalization and incentives for direct foreign investment. Those reforms had coincided with the negative impact of the economic transformations in some of its main trading partners. However, it had managed to contain inflation, while at the same time introducing full convertibility of the rupee on the trade account. Much more needed to be done, however, before the economy could be put on the path to self-sustained growth and the benefits of development would percolate significantly to different segments of the population. India needed the continued cooperation of the developed countries, even while it was accelerating integration and linkages with economies in the South.

70. To that end, the maintenance of an open, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system based on rules was crucial. However, there had been no halting or reversing of protectionist trends in some of the major developed countries. His delegation hoped that a balanced, successful and early completion of the Uruguay Round would be possible.

71. On the debt front, while his delegation welcomed the formulation of various debt-reduction schemes, it felt that there was still a need for a concerted effort on the part of creditors, including the multilateral financial institutions, to find an early and durable solution to the debt problem. Such a solution should cover all types of debt while being sensitive to the specific problems and requirements of individual countries.

(Mr. Thakur, India)

72. With regard to sustainable development, he said that India attached great importance to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and would like to stress that provision of additional financial resources and transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries were critical elements for the implementation of Agenda 21.

73. Several delegations had referred to the need to place human beings at the centre of development. India had done so from the beginning of its development process. The only question was whether or not the modality for that approach should be within the judgement of the sovereign nation, a concept that continued to be the essential basis for international cooperation. The World Summit for Social Development, therefore, should define a vision of development based on the right to food, work, education, health and shelter, but without conditionalities attached to cooperation. India had shown its commitment, throughout several decades, to the values of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law, and felt that all human rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural - were universal and indivisible. His delegation was pleased that the Vienna Declaration had also recognized the right to development.

74. To further and deepen the development process, the international community should agree on an international framework that would facilitate stable and non-discriminatory access by developing countries to new technologies on reasonable terms. In addition, there should be a transparent and objective evaluation of the restrictions imposed on such technologies on grounds of "dual use".

75. The United Nations should play an enhanced role in working out an agenda for the development of developing countries since a narrow concern with peace and security was bound to be self-defeating unless supported by economic development. The availability of finance on an assured and stable basis was essential for the United Nations operational side, but any reform in that area should be consistent with the guiding philosophy of the Charter and the mandates of the various organs.

76. South-South cooperation was increasingly recognized as a necessary and viable strategy and thought should be given to how it could contribute effectively to economic take-off.

77. In conclusion, the need for an integrated approach to development should be stressed. Questions of debt, aid flows, trading environment, population and social development, to mention but a few, should all be pursued as part of an integrated package. At each conference, sets of agreed norms were worked out, but it was unclear whether there was a central unified strategy. The agenda for development should therefore be finalized at an early date.

78. Mr. KAARIA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland - noted that, with a few exceptions, the outlook for the world economy was gloomy. Recession and high unemployment continued to prevail in the industrialized countries, particularly in Western Europe, and the world economy was further strained by the process of transition in the former centrally planned economies. One notable exception was the performance of a number of developing countries in South-East Asia; recent

/...

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

developments in some Latin American countries were also encouraging. The situation for the least developed countries, most of which were in sub-Saharan Africa, remained alarming; adjustment programmes produced results but only after a painfully long period of sustained effort and population was still growing faster than output, resulting in continued negative growth per capita.

79. Each country was responsible for its own economic and social development and thus for the policy adopted to achieve it. It was not merely a question of the policy chosen to induce and mobilize resources for development, however, but also a question of distributing the benefits. It was encouraging that many developing countries were giving a greater role to market-oriented policies and the private sector and that the need for good governance, respect for human rights and democracy was increasingly being recognized.

80. In an interdependent world, economic progress was also stimulated by an international environment conducive to development and it was more important than ever to induce confidence in the multilateral trading system and therefore to bring the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion.

81. It was equally important to reduce the debt burden and, while the situation in Latin America had improved, most low-income countries in Africa were still tightly gripped by the crisis. In those countries, drastic action was needed for further debt reduction. Where there was a good track record of economic reform and adjustment the total stock of official or officially guaranteed bilateral debt should be reduced. The Nordic countries remained willing to grant those countries up to 80 per cent reductions in the stock of debt, although they recognized that debt problems should be considered in the appropriate forums.

82. In addition to sound national policies and a favourable international economic environment, official development assistance remained crucially important for the poorest developing countries.

83. In that general context, the Nordic countries believed that there were some priority issues before the Committee.

84. First, there was reform of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. That undertaking was crucial, not only for the future of operational activities, but also as a test of the international community's ability to carry out meaningful reforms, the need for which seemed generally to be recognized. It was of the utmost importance also to send the right signal to decision makers and to the public at large. The Nordic countries were insisting on real reforms to ensure that their contributions were used to the optimum benefit of the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Competition between the channels to be used was, therefore, increasing and, unless United Nations funds and programmes were upgraded, the United Nations role in development aid would decrease further. The issue of new Executive Boards should be solved in the context of a broad discussion on the role, functioning and size of the Boards. The operational agencies really needed more efficient conduct of their executive bodies. Unless agreement was reached on the role of the new Boards vis-à-vis the Economic and Social Council and on how they should function in practice, it would be very difficult to find a balance between the

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

question of efficiency and that of representation. The developing country recipients in particular, especially the least developed among them, would suffer from any failure in that respect since there would be little hope of securing a sound financial base for the programmes and funds. Time was running out for that phase of reform. The Nordic countries would present further input to the continued discussions on the role, functioning and size of the Executive Boards.

85. The agenda for development was another area of high priority. The issue was complex and the Nordic countries had already given the Secretary-General their views on the structure of the agenda which should contribute to the creation of a clear and unified strategic framework for the United Nations system in the development field. The agenda for development would provide an opportunity to rethink development as a global issue encompassing countries in the North and in the South as well as those in transition. The broader concept of sustainable development had links with the protection of human rights and democratization as well as with political stability and peace. Account must also be taken of other organizations in the development field and the division of labour between them.

86. Humanitarian assistance was one area in which reforms had already been carried out. During its coordination segment, the Economic and Social Council had discussed how the coordination of humanitarian assistance and emergency relief functioned in practice between the various agencies involved, and had agreed on a set of specific recommendations. General Assembly resolution 46/182, which laid down the guiding principles and outlined the new tools for coordination, was still valid and the General Assembly should focus its deliberations on policy issues, the role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the tools established in that resolution.

87. Sustainable development remained high on the list of priorities for the Nordic countries. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been the starting point for the solution of complex and interdependent issues. The work had been continued in June at the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission had an important monitoring function with regard to implementation at both national and international levels. The spirit of Rio must be maintained and the notion of common responsibility upheld at the forthcoming important United Nations conferences on population and development and on women, as well as at the Social Summit. At those conferences, as at Rio, it would be necessary to think in terms of the interrelationships between population imbalances, poverty alleviation and environmental constraints. With the increasing gap between population growth and resource use, a large part of the world's population was excluded from economic and social development and also suffered from poverty and environmental degradation. It was essential for development to be people-centred. The Nordic countries believed that the advancement of women as agents of economic and social development was crucial.

88. The agenda for development would provide an opportunity for reviewing the concept of development and redefining the role of the United Nations, and the restructuring and revitalization of the Organization would provide it with the necessary tools to perform its role in that field.

/...

89. Mr. CALOVSKI (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that there was general dissatisfaction with the world economic situation with respect both to current activities and to measures designed to improve the situation. However, for the clear reasons given by well-known experts and in the reports of UNCTAD, IMF, the World Bank and GATT among others, the international community did not yet seem prepared to take the necessary action to liberalize world trade and improve the world economic system. It was essential to promote the growth of the world economy, in particular by boosting demand, improving access to markets, liberalizing world trade in all sectors, solving the problems of international debt, improving access to financial markets and, in Europe, by speeding up integration, if the wish was truly to promote the effective international cooperation which was essential in the present economic environment. The economies of the developing countries and the countries in transition must not be allowed to deteriorate further or stagnate. Only development could create the necessary conditions for development. It was therefore essential for the international community to assist those countries in their development, and it was to be hoped that the United Nations would play a leading role in that endeavour, in which the work of the Second Committee could be very important.

90. The Republic of Macedonia was a developing country in transition and also a land-locked country. Its location in Europe and its work force offered enormous possibilities, but it could not use them to the full and needed the support of the international community and a more favourable climate conducive to development in the region. The country was experiencing enormous problems owing to the sanctions which the Security Council had imposed against Serbia and Montenegro. Because of the policy pursued by another country and the measures which the Security Council had decided to take under Article 41 of the Charter, there was a constant fear of economic collapse. The Republic of Macedonia fully shared the conviction that all States Members of the United Nations must abide by the provisions of the Charter, but at the same time it stressed that all the provisions of the Charter were of equal importance. In imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) the Security Council had not taken fully into account all the implications of Article 50 of the Charter, and the many efforts to secure implementation of Article 50, particularly those to help the most seriously affected countries, were not receiving due attention. The Republic of Macedonia was providing daily information about the losses suffered, as it had been advised to do, but it was receiving no aid and many factories had had to close.

91. The Republic of Macedonia was a land-locked country, so that the traditional route to West and Central Europe passed through Serbia, and the consequent need to ship its goods through Bulgaria, Romania or Greece made them much less competitive since the transport problems were often even further aggravated by the failure to resolve problems with the neighbour to the south. Furthermore, the problems of access to financial markets - for the question of the succession of the former Yugoslavia had not yet been fully settled - meant that the Republic of Macedonia had acquired debts of several million dollars. Despite numerous promises the problem had still not been solved.

92. The Republic of Macedonia was ready to be fully integrated in the European and world economies but the situation in its immediate surroundings was blocking its efforts. It had succeeded, without the loss of a single human life, in

(Mr. Calovski, Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia)

becoming an independent and sovereign State, an important factor for peace in the Balkans. It now had to overcome the enormous economic difficulties resulting from the United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. Without the help of the international community the economic situation might become disastrous.

93. His delegation, together with a number of others, intended to submit a draft resolution on the implementation of Article 50 of the Charter, with a view to assisting the countries most seriously affected by the action taken by the Security Council under Article 41 of the Charter.

94. With regard to the particular problems of land-locked countries, the Republic of Macedonia was looking forward to the report which the General Assembly had requested from the Secretary-General in resolution 46/212. Together with other land-locked countries it hoped to be able to submit a draft resolution on the particular problems of such countries, inter alia to reaffirm the rights of access to the sea and freedom of transit.

95. As a country in transition, the Republic of Macedonia was also encountering all the problems with which other such countries were struggling every day. Some of the reforms which it had introduced had made considerable progress, especially with regard to the development of a market economy and privatization, which had been particularly successful in agriculture, services and small enterprises.

96. The Second Committee had a formidable task: to do as much as possible to secure the conclusion of the Uruguay Round before the end of the year; to help with the implementation of the commitments entered into at Rio; to prepare for the population conference at Cairo and the 1995 Social Summit; and to examine in depth the future agenda for development. The draft resolutions which the Committee was going to submit to the General Assembly should be action-oriented and drafted in a spirit of interdependence, taking fully into account the pressing needs of the economies of the developing countries, land-locked countries and countries in transition. It was important to do everything possible to ensure that the post-cold-war period did not become a period of political and economic conflicts.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Monday, 11 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. MONGBE

(Benin)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.6
26 October 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. FERNANDEZ DE COSSIO (Cuba) expressed disappointment that, three years after the adoption of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, its goals were still far from being achieved, particularly accelerated development in the developing countries, strengthened international cooperation and a significant improvement in the human condition in the developing countries. In its fourth decade of attempting to overcome structural underdevelopment, the Second Committee was still sacrificing a realistic approach and the satisfaction of pressing needs to a desire for consensus. At the same time, the Group of 77, which promoted bold initiatives year after year, saw its efforts thwarted by the refusal to implement specific, practical measures to change the existing international order. Nor had the response been great to the Colombian representative's appeal, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, for balance between United Nations activities for peace and security and its obligations regarding cooperation for development. Even more alarming was the fact that the Organization's programme and budget processes were advanced as pretexts for relegating development initiatives even further into the background.

2. The United Nations must play a stronger role in resolving the greatest threats to mankind. The number of deaths among third world children under five years of age over an 18-month period was higher than all the casualties of war and conflict since the establishment of the Organization. Approximately 42 million children under 5 years of age had died since the beginning of the fourth International Development Strategy. It was therefore inconceivable that the Organization should place such emphasis on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and other concepts that drew considerable resources away from developing countries and provided employment for national armed forces but did nothing to stop avoidable death and suffering in the third world.

3. Cuba endorsed the idea of an agenda for development, and believed that its fundamental aim should be to find ways and means of implementing already existing instruments on international cooperation and strengthening the role of the United Nations in that area. It was to be hoped that industrialized countries would become more aware of development problems and take action to bring about a truly just international order, rather than the spurious one that had emerged from the end of the cold war and had brought third world countries neither benefits nor hope. Underdevelopment would not be corrected by solutions thought up at European and North American universities, by ambassadors representing the Secretary-General and, least of all, by military operations that distributed food at gunpoint - the plight of Somalia was demonstrating that it was easier to kill the hungry than to eliminate hunger. The answer lay in addressing key issues, such as unequal terms of trade, external debt and the monopolization of commodity prices, and in implementing a development programme that sought to promote equity in education, health and other social areas. Moreover, development must be sustainable, and, as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had stressed, consumption patterns in the industrialized world and poverty in the underdeveloped world could not continue if that objective was to be achieved.

(Mr. Fernandez de Cossio,
Cuba)

4. Cuba, a small, underdeveloped third world country, was in an especially difficult economic situation. In 1993, the loss of trading partners in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the economic embargo imposed by the United States of America had been compounded by climatic phenomena and a rare epidemic which had taken a huge toll in lives and resources. The only element that was not beyond control was the United States embargo in effect for more than 30 years, which cut off Cuba's commercial relations not only with United States entities and citizens but also with a sizeable group of countries whose rights had also been infringed on. That was yet another example of how vulnerable the developing countries were in an unjust and inequitable system of international economic relations. In conclusion, his delegation fully supported the statement issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 on 5 October and the opening statement delivered by the Chairman of the Second Committee.

5. Mr. GOUDYMA (Ukraine) said that in view of the growing importance of development issues, recognized in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/48/1, paras. 4 and 7), there must be closer coordination between the Organization's social and economic activities and its humanitarian and peace-keeping activities. The agenda for development being prepared by the Secretary-General would provide a conceptual framework for strengthening the role of the United Nations in facilitating international economic cooperation. It would also intensify relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, without any ideological constraints. Ukraine shared the view of those delegations which believed that an agenda for development should reflect up-to-date trends in socio-economic development and should be of practical value. United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors should take into account the interests of the Central and Eastern European countries, whose transition to a market economy had proved to be far more difficult than imagined. According to the World Economic Survey 1993, the standard of living in those economies had plunged since 1989, and per capita output had fallen by almost one third in the States of the former Soviet Union.

6. Ukraine was deep in the throes of an economic and energy crisis. Decades of a command economic and administrative system had left it with an unsound management model, an imbalanced economic structure, severe ecological problems and depleted natural resources. It could no longer use the gold and hard-currency reserves of the former Soviet Union, was faced with overwhelming expenses in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster and had suffered losses as a result of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. Ukraine was determined to make the transition to a State which guaranteed political, economic and ideological diversity, human rights, the revival of national culture and equality of ownership and management, but had already made mistakes in that long, arduous process. It had been slow to implement integrated socio-economic change because its authorities had not yet managed to propose an economic reform programme or a national economic model aimed at satisfying basic human needs, and there had been little teamwork among government officials.

(Mr. Goudyma, Ukraine)

7. Ukraine believed that its economic stability was directly related to the renewal of severed economic ties and mutually advantageous cooperation with all the States established in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Categorically opposed to the policies of economic pressure and blackmail, it favoured the development of rational economic ties between enterprises and the removal of artificial barriers to that end. Ukraine wished to enjoy mutually beneficial economic relations with its neighbours within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States but did not believe that the Commonwealth should become a super-State structure. It would not be a party to any agreement or union infringing on its own national and economic sovereignty. It had not signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the International Economic Community (Commonwealth of Independent States) but had declared its intention to become an associate member. Recognizing that cooperative global integration was imperative, as in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/48/1, para. 13), Ukraine hoped to integrate its economy gradually into the European and world economy. In that spirit, it had become a member of international financial institutions and an associate member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and it hoped for the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. It also participated in projects within the framework of European and Black Sea cooperation.

8. Ukraine attached great importance to General Assembly resolution 47/187 on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy. United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors could help Ukraine to resolve a number of its problems. It hoped that United Nations assistance would be substantive - not merely technical - and would promote foreign investment in the Ukrainian economy under the favourable conditions offered by its national legislation. The creation of an internal market and the development of foreign trade would also be vital. Ukraine had taken a number of measures in order to broaden its national export capabilities and develop bilateral trade and economic ties with other countries. It would benefit greatly from the opening of new credit lines; from external assistance to the implementation of economic reforms, in particular, of its banking and finance systems; and from the assistance of international financial institutions in establishing a small, private fund to promote business and foreign investment.

9. The establishment of integrated United Nations interim offices was an issue that had become overpoliticized, and yet a new model for ensuring a United Nations presence in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States was fully consistent with the provisions of resolution 47/199. An integrated office would be of great value in Ukraine. The main purpose of the interim offices should be to carry out operational activities. Other functions could be assigned to them with the agreement of the host country.

10. His delegation attached great importance to expanded United Nations activities to promote international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Such activities seemed to have lost momentum, until the Secretary-General's recent appointment of a Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl. His delegation hoped that the new Coordinator's efforts would be supported by the programmes and projects of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

11. Mr. PRONK (Netherlands) noted that, after the transforming events of 1989, the world was in a period of transition, fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, it was becoming increasingly interdependent as goods, services and people, including refugees, moved across borders. On the other hand, States were being fragmented by ethnic and religious strife and micro-nationalist movements. International cooperation was increasing, but the United Nations was hampered by a lack of collective will, organizing power and financial means. Regional cooperation and integration were on the increase, but there was a risk that, in adverse conditions, they could lead to the emergence of fiercely competing, even hostile blocs. The outcome of the Uruguay Round was thus even more crucial. Against that backdrop, development and underdevelopment had acquired new meanings as well. A number of developing countries were becoming dynamic forces in the world economy even as former communist countries were in the process of a fragile socio-economic transformation and the industrialized countries were deep in recession.

12. In the meantime, poverty remained very high in absolute terms, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of impoverished women was rising. Lately, however, inequality and poverty had become increasingly transnational phenomena, as illustrated by the spread of poverty-related diseases, such as tuberculosis, diphtheria and malaria; poverty-related migration; and world-wide unemployment. There were more poor people in rich countries and a larger middle class in many poor countries. Whereas, at the beginning of the twentieth century, exploitation had been the chief cause of inequality and poverty, the causes of marginalization and poverty at the end of the century were exclusion and neglect. A strategy for social integration was needed in order to deal with exclusion from markets, access to resources and economic, social and political rights.

13. The World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, would provide an excellent opportunity for building a global consensus on social integration. First of all, the concept of development itself must be redefined in order to correct the problems of ecological and political exclusion from the development process. As pointed out by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, an increasing proportion of the world's population was marginalized from the world's ecosystem, without any means of protecting its water, air and land resources. Such exclusion must be rectified by reducing material consumption in richer countries, redistributing natural wealth between rich and poor and reducing natural population growth. In that connection, the decisions taken at the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, would have a momentous impact on the population policy of the twenty-first century.

14. Political exclusion must be addressed not only by recognizing the close connection between conflict and development, but also by integrating the protection of cultural rights into the concept of development. Encouragement of mutual respect and communication among peoples of different backgrounds would be one means of preventing non-economic, e.g. culturally motivated, conflicts. Sustainable development also depended on the existence of a political order which guaranteed the participation and empowerment of all peoples, including freedom of expression and assembly. Development and peace were indivisible, as illustrated by the fact that economic assistance often facilitated compromise between warring factions, helped to rehabilitate war-torn economies and

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

prevented conflicts from escalating through support to the establishment of a democratic society.

15. Development and peace were indivisible. Now that East and West finally had begun drastically to reduce their armaments, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament should also become priorities for the South. That would help lessen tensions between and within countries and would free resources for development. Countries of the North should convert military assistance into economic assistance, slow down the arms trade, decrease subsidies for military exports and make military debts transparent.

16. The Security Council should consider inviting the Economic and Social Council to report to it on trends in social, economic and environmental areas which, unless mitigated, might constitute threats to international peace and security. That would require more flexibility in the Economic and Social Council's working procedures and modalities.

17. His delegation fully supported the steps taken thus far by the Secretary-General to restructure the United Nations system in order to eliminate overlaps in the mandates and activities of various components of the system. The effects of their implementation should be closely monitored and further adjustments should be made where necessary. Member States must not allow discussions on the reform of the intergovernmental machinery to drag on. States also should accept a fully unified United Nations presence in the field, for failure to do so would further marginalize the role of the United Nations in development.

18. Agenda 21 provided an integrated approach to development that had been accepted at the highest political level, and there was no need for a further comprehensive, negotiated document. It was now time to translate Agenda 21 and other basic documents into concise guidelines for the United Nations system in the field of development. The proposed agenda for development could provide those guidelines.

19. The fight against poverty remained the international community's most urgent task. While much had been achieved, many countries still lacked a domestic policy aimed at consciously fighting poverty, and the current international economic environment was not conducive to supporting such policies.

20. The scope for official financial flows broadened as the world's understanding of interdependence grew. The need for resources also increased. Although budgetary constraints had compelled his Government to decrease its level of development assistance during the current year, he was pleased to announce that its aid budget in 1994 would be higher than the 1993 figure. It was also encouraging to note that some developing countries which had made substantial progress in their economic development might be in a position to devote more resources to their own development and even become donors of aid. The concept of official development assistance must be refined to encompass aid to some poorer countries, such as those on the southern rim of the former Eastern bloc, which were transforming their economic and political systems. The increasing links between poverty, transition, environment, migration and peace also must be reflected in a new definition of "aid".

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

21. Lastly, he said that obstacles to an integrated approach to development must be eliminated in order to meet modern global challenges.

22. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras) said that the desire of the developing countries to enhance the quality of life of their inhabitants should be a shared international effort and should result in vocational training and guaranteed improved access to the opportunities afforded by expanding open economies. The protectionist measures imposed by some States on traditional exports from Latin America ran counter to the open multilateral trading system that was essential for the growth of world trade and the economic development of all countries. It was therefore imperative to bring the Uruguay Round to a satisfactory conclusion. Failure to do so would have serious consequences for world trade, for the expectations of the developing countries and for the structural programmes which many of them were introducing at great sacrifice.

23. It was also necessary to increase technology transfers in order to promote industrial development and to introduce more flexibility in the financing of industrial parks in the developing countries.

24. Lastly, he noted that the decline in the prices of primary commodities during the past year had had a serious impact on the economies of the developing countries, and he therefore underscored the need for improved access to international markets at fair prices.

25. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that the impact of the recession had been felt most sharply in the developing countries, particularly those with the most vulnerable economies. Since 1945, the international community had pursued the development of the developing countries through three principal instruments: access to finance, access to markets and access to the technology and skills required for development. Unfortunately, such access had always been unequal. In the area of trade, for example, irrational arrangements for international trade in textiles, agriculture, steel, automobiles, electronics and a growing number of other products continued because vested interests had successfully resisted genuine liberalization. The priorities and interests of the developing countries had figured marginally in the Uruguay Round, even in such areas as textiles and agriculture. There was a danger that the establishment of regional trading blocs might exclude many developing countries from preferential access to the markets of the developed countries.

26. Although financial flows to developing countries had improved during the past year in macroeconomic terms, the needs of many of the poorest countries must be addressed more vigorously. Impediments to technology transfers to developing countries also were multiplying, and the approach to the issue was often arbitrary, discriminatory and detrimental to the goals of development cooperation and economic progress.

27. Despite the clear commitment to address the issues of poverty and development made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, no additional resources had been pledged. It was to be hoped that the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development would evoke a global commitment to action to cope with the population problem through economic growth, education and human development.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

28. The poorest countries had been plunged into desperation by the economic recession of the past few years, and there was a danger that entire countries and communities could collapse, as the situation in Somalia indicated. The world already confronted too many conflicts, and could not afford such a political breakdown in the third world.

29. It was time to build a new "consensus" for development which responded to the imposing challenges but also seized new opportunities for international economic cooperation. The nations of the world shared a common commitment to the ideals of free market economics and democratic politics, and the world community had acquired the capability and experience to bring its combined expertise to bear when addressing the gravest consequences of poverty. Above all, modern technology offered new answers to the problems of poverty, pollution and social organization.

30. Discussions on the proposed agenda for development would provide the opportunity to evolve a new consensus which could include, inter alia, an agreement for the establishment of a global economy based on the principle of competitive advantage which encouraged the progressive integration of the developing countries into the system of world trade and finance. Secondly, the consensus should incorporate an agreement to create a non-discriminatory world trading system based on equal opportunities for all States, the progressive elimination of protectionist measures, and preferential treatment for the more disadvantaged States for transitional periods. Thirdly, world financial arrangements should offer greater equity in the distribution of international liquidity to all countries and significantly enhance development finance. Greater cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial institutions was essential to that end. Fourthly, the transfer and application of modern technologies for economic and social development should be intensified, and problems relating to weapons proliferation should be dealt with on a cooperative and non-discriminatory basis. Fifthly, agreement should be reached to fulfil the global commitments entered into in various forums on ways and means of addressing such global issues as the environment, food production, trade, social development and population. Lastly, it was necessary to define the role of the United Nations in the formulation of such an agenda and in the coordination and harmonization of action to attain the goals set out in it.

31. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that it was time to find pragmatic and innovative formulas for translating into reality the commitments undertaken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with regard to the environment and sustainable development and to prove wrong those who claimed that the United Nations was already the prisoner of a new bureaucracy. Her delegation attached high priority to the conclusion during the coming year of negotiations on desertification, the sustainable development of small island developing States, and straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The state of the fish stocks off her country's Atlantic coast was becoming increasingly alarming. Only an agreement to regulate fishing on the high seas that was legally binding on all the parties concerned could solve a problem which threatened all the world's seas. Her delegation also looked forward to a dialogue which would turn the principles adopted at Rio with regard to forests into practical measures for cooperation. The fact that she had singled out

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

certain issues did not in any way diminish the importance which her delegation attached to the implementation of all of Agenda 21.

32. Her delegation hoped that a spirit of cooperation would continue to inspire efforts to restructure and revitalize the Economic and Social Council. The credibility, relevance and dynamism of the United Nations development system depended on that. The efforts of the Nordic delegations in that sphere were a source of inspiration. It was imperative to resolve, to the satisfaction of all, any remaining areas of disagreement and to adopt the relevant draft resolution by consensus. The measures to be contained in the draft resolution would facilitate the process of restructuring and revitalizing the Council. It also was necessary to enable the Council fully to carry out the role assigned to it.

33. With regard to operational activities, the rigorous implementation of directives adopted at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly with respect to the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator, the elaboration of country strategy notes and the elimination of duplication, would reinforce the capacity of the United Nations development system to address the pressing problems confronting the developing countries in a coherent, rational and effective manner, and would maximize the impact of available resources.

34. With regard to the question of interim offices, her delegation underscored the need for cost-efficiency, the elimination of duplication and the effective functioning of the United Nations development system in the field. If agreement was reached on those objectives, it should be possible to define the mandate and functions of integrated United Nations offices for the benefit of the Member States served by them.

35. With regard to the role and functioning of the World Food Council, it was imperative to put world food security issues back in perspective and to refocus attention on them in the light of current realities and evolving concepts of development. Her delegation hoped that the recommendation that the World Food Council should be maintained as a distinct ministerial body would provide new opportunities for reconciling existing diverging views and that a consensus could be reached, with a view to taking a decision on the future of the Council during the current session of the General Assembly.

36. The reform and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors would not alone ensure that the United Nations could meet the challenges posed by a changing geopolitical panorama and profound socio-economic transformations. While the United Nations was a less marginal actor in the face of current challenges than some maintained, it was no less true that its actions remained scattered and that it continued to expend resources and energies in enterprises which no longer had a reason to exist.

37. It was time to rethink concepts of development and adapt cooperation to new requirements. Her delegation therefore warmly welcomed the initiative to develop an agenda for development. The Secretary-General should not hesitate to question the concepts, methods and structures which for so long had provided the framework for United Nations actions. He should propose a global and integrated vision out of which the nascent idea of sustainable human development should

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

emerge with greater clarity. The agenda should mobilize international cooperation around clear priorities and a more rational division of responsibility among the various development institutions. Her delegation intended to contribute to the discussion on the proposed agenda at the current session.

38. Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) said that although international détente provided signs of positive political change in the world, the economic and social challenges facing the developing countries were a threat to peace and security. Political, economic, social and cultural conflicts in various parts of the world underscored the interdependence of peace, development and democracy. Those goals must continue to be the primary focus of the United Nations.

39. Changes within his country during the past three years reflected the aspirations of the people for a democratic society in which fundamental freedoms and social justice prevailed. While there had been no major upheavals, economic activity had slowed down. His country deeply appreciated the assistance provided by the international community during that critical stage.

40. In order to preserve and consolidate the political gains achieved thus far, his Government must be in a position to ensure that the fundamental needs of the population were met and that its purchasing power increased rapidly. To that end, a programme of reforms would be undertaken to revitalize the economy, taking into account the social and ecological dimensions of development. Innovative legislation would be adopted with a view to developing human resources, promoting private initiative, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, introducing more liberal trade and exchange mechanisms, and promoting exports and foreign investment.

41. The Government would formulate clear guidelines for production and investment in order to guarantee essential political support for the effective implementation of the programme. It urged its development partners to give their full support to the restructuring. Liberalization measures would give its economy greater flexibility in order to capitalize on comparative advantage, and his Government therefore looked forward to the swift and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

42. The success and durability of structural adjustment programmes depended greatly on external factors, and the negative effects of exchange and interest rate fluctuations and the severe drop in commodity prices and terms of trade remained a cause for concern. Africa, which included over half of the least developed countries, deserved particular attention. The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had become extremely urgent. His delegation also attached great importance to the preparations for the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development.

43. In spite of recent commitments in the area of international cooperation for development, there was an apparent decline in the spirit of cooperation, as evidenced by the adoption of protectionist policies and a reduction in resources

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

and effort allocated to development programmes and problems such as the external debt crisis. The United Nations had a fundamental role to play in promoting international cooperation, because its principles of universality and sovereign equality provided a global, integrated perspective on those problems. The restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social sectors should strengthen its role in addressing international economic issues. His Government adhered strongly to the principles of democratization and transparency in national government, which were not incompatible with the concern for efficiency. It supported efforts to coordinate the activities and policies of international financial, monetary and commercial institutions with those of the United Nations system.

44. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that his delegation had participated in the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and was pleased with the progress made. Agreement had been reached on several aspects of the draft programme of action but the sections dealing with implementation and monitoring were still to be decided. Those extremely critical aspects of the programme must receive the greatest possible attention from the Preparatory Committee. Therefore, his delegation supported the proposal for a resumed session of the Preparatory Committee to be held before April 1994 in order to reach agreement on the programme of action. The Preparatory Committee had established a case for the unique problems of small island developing States related to size, isolation and environmental vulnerability. It was critically important that a specific international mechanism should be established within the United Nations to respond to those needs and to monitor implementation of the programme of action. Moreover, high priority should be given to the establishment of focal points within all specialized agencies with expertise and responsibility for implementation of particular areas of the programme of action.

45. Turning to the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in 1994, he noted that Fiji had had a very successful population programme since the early 1970s, with particular emphasis on health and family planning. It recognized the linkages among population growth, environment and sustainable development. Fiji therefore supported the Conference's objectives, and hoped that it would address population programmes in the context of wider development issues. A process of consultation and dialogue on the complex and highly sensitive issues to be dealt with would assist greatly in the implementation of the outcome of the Conference.

46. His delegation looked forward to a frank exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development. That report must take into account the concerns of all countries, including small island countries, set the guidelines for future United Nations action in the economic and social fields and identify the organization which would take the lead in its implementation. His delegation also supported the recent initiative by Papua New Guinea for a comprehensive and systematic study of the opportunities for participation in the economies of developing countries, which would complement the Secretary-General's report and identify ways to create and maintain such opportunities.

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

47. As a universal forum for objectively reviewing the world economy, the Second Committee must continue to analyse the implications of policy options for Member States and, through the machinery of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, assist them in reaching agreement on broad objectives and general policy guidelines for member Governments, international financial organizations and regional organizations.

48. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that reform of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors was needed more than ever before because of the urgent need to promote economic development, alleviate poverty and deliver international humanitarian assistance. Recently, major efforts had been focused on peace-keeping and international peace and security, but equal focus was needed on providing a decent standard of living for the peoples of the world. The new concept of sustainable development must be incorporated into the agenda of the United Nations without abrogating the fundamental development priorities of developing countries. Because the global economic recession was limiting resources for development, better use must be made of existing multilateral resources and more efficient working methods must be employed to achieve better results.

49. The package on the reform of the economic and social sectors before the Committee at the current session represented the end of an intensive process spanning more than two years which had involved an analysis of the need to revitalize the Economic and Social Council, operational agencies and the Second Committee, complemented by lengthy and complex negotiations. Yet that package had not yet been completed, and many delegations had expressed the view that it fell short of expectation in some areas. From an historical perspective, the reform exercise represented significant progress towards change after years of stagnation. The negotiation process was just a beginning, however; the reform package must be adopted before the end of the session. The package represented an outstanding piece of work by all contributors, and only a few details relating to the size and functioning of the executive boards of the funds and programmes remained to be resolved. Given its extreme importance, a satisfactory means to achieve consensus must be found, so that the international community could then look forward to the possibility of addressing issues of real importance through the multilateral bodies.

50. Without the reform, the urgent needs of Member States, particularly those of developing countries, would increasingly outstrip the Organization's ability to meet them. If matters could be set right on the economic and social side as well as the peace-keeping side, however, the current session would be viewed as truly remarkable.

51. Mr. BENSHABAN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the statement of the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. The end of the cold war had opened up new vistas for international cooperation and development, as well as political changes which would favour peace and security and prosperity and progress. There was an urgent need to redirect resources from military to civilian uses. According to the World Economic Survey 1993, stagnation was prevalent in many parts of the world. The high social costs of improved economic performance had affected many developing countries, aggravating the phenomena of poverty, unemployment and flows of

(Mr. Benshaban, Libyan
Arab Jamahiriya)

refugees, displaced persons and forced migrants, as well as engendering chronic structural imbalances, above all in Africa, where poverty, underdevelopment, the harshness of natural conditions, and indebtedness were particularly acute.

52. The development efforts of the developing countries were being thwarted by the reverse flow of resources, the decline in basic commodity prices, the industrial protectionism of the developed countries and the obstruction of the transfer of technology. There was therefore an urgent need for an open, transparent, regulated and non-discriminatory international trade system; consequently, he called for a rapid and successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. He also stressed the importance of cooperation among developing countries and the revival of the North-South dialogue, which had suffered from a lack of political will on the part of the advanced countries and from insignificant progress on the establishment of a just international economic order, despite important initiatives over the previous two decades taken by the special sessions of the General Assembly and multilateral conferences.

53. The imposition by certain advanced countries of economic blockades and trade restrictions on a number of developing countries and the freezing of their assets hampered those countries' economic and social development, thereby adversely affecting the world economy. Such practices were, moreover, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. He drew particular attention to the iniquitous sanctions imposed on his own country, which had harmed the economy and large segments of the population, as substantiated most recently in document S/26139.

54. The international community must take urgent measures to reverse the negative flow of resources. The advanced countries should meet their targets for contributions to official development assistance (ODA) of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), give the developing countries greater opportunities to acquire advanced technology under equitable conditions and, in general, support development in the developing countries in accordance with, in particular, Agenda 21.

55. His country attached particular importance to protection of the environment. It had undertaken the Great Man-Made River Project, which carried water from the south to the north to aid land reclamation and new settlements. However, efforts had been hampered by the presence of unexploded mines and matériel from the Second World War. He called for implementation of the numerous international and regional resolutions urging the countries responsible to provide the necessary information and technical assistance to remove such debris and to pay compensation for the damage caused by it.

56. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields must be based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter, which consecrated the international character of the United Nations, equality among nations with respect to the adoption of resolutions and fair geographical representation in the composition of the various executive bodies.

(Mr. Benshaban, Libyan
Arab Jamahiriya)

57. He welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 and the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark, also in 1995. Thorough preparation of those conferences would provide a strong political impetus for the adoption of a global approach to economic and social problems in the world.

58. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that, although the end of the era of global confrontation had offered the prospect of a new world order, the international situation was far from optimistic. The conflicts that had threatened international peace and security had given way to local and internal conflicts that continued to occupy Governments' attention and prevented productive resources from being used for immediate development needs. Moreover, the world economy remained sluggish. While the developing countries had registered comparatively high rates of economic growth, the economic situation in developed market-economy countries was marked by stagnation, and a dangerous decline continued in the countries with economies in transition.

59. One of the major causes of the adverse international economic situation was the reduction of military expenditure. While the reduction of military budgets was a direct result of the transition to a post-confrontational world order, it gave rise to serious problems, the solution of which required coordinated action by the world community.

60. During the first eight months of 1993, industrial production in Belarus had fallen by 15.6 per cent. In spite of the Government's efforts to stabilize the economy, the situation remained complex. The highly militarized industry of Belarus was in extremely difficult circumstances. The summer rains and floods had made it difficult to provide the population with foodstuffs, and industry with raw material. In spite of those obstacles, Belarus was proceeding with its transition to a market economy, and its Parliament and Government had undertaken the task of creating the necessary legal basis for that economic transition. So far, 192 State and municipal enterprises had been privatized. By the end of 1993, 25 per cent of all small-scale enterprises involved in trade and services and 15 per cent of medium and large enterprises would be in private hands. Unfortunately, practically no foreign investors were taking part in that process, and the Government of Belarus had very limited credit resources that could be used to support national private investors.

61. His Government was resolved to continue to improve the legal and organizational bases for foreign trade. Belarus had been one of the initiators of the economic union of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and had signed the pertinent treaty, which would promote economic and financial stabilization in the region. Such cooperation would further the consolidation of an economically powerful group of States that would gradually become integrated in European and world economic structures and become an increasingly important factor in world economic growth.

62. Measures must be taken to remove various trade restrictions imposed on States of Central and Eastern Europe. His delegation was pleased that the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

Congress had recently recommended the repeal of federal legislation containing discriminatory trade and economic measures affecting the former Soviet republics. He hoped that other countries would follow suit.

63. His delegation would vigorously support United Nations resolutions and decisions containing measures to support the new economic consensus of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. With the political support of all Member States, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were providing sorely needed technical assistance, particularly for the mitigation of the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. In that regard, the United Nations/UNDP interim office in Minsk played a very useful and practical role. His delegation believed that the Secretariat should elaborate an integral concept of international assistance to countries in transition.

64. Belarus understood the serious difficulties experienced by the developing countries and, in particular, many African States. To turn a blind eye to the famine, disease, mass illiteracy and child mortality in those countries was immoral. His Government was convinced that the new world order must be based on a more equitable distribution of the world's goods. His delegation hoped that the World Summit on Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Population and Development and the Secretary-General's forthcoming report on an agenda for development would be a major contribution to the elaboration of a new vision of global social and economic cooperation.

65. Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua) said that, in rationalizing its work, the Committee should take care not to narrow its mandate or limit its important role. The fact that the agreements and historic commitments that had been reached over the years had not yet resulted in more effective or relevant actions or measures meant only that more political will was needed to ensure their full implementation.

66. One way of improving the work of the General Assembly was to consider carefully the real need for every report that was requested, since many documents provided little or no new information. His delegation was particularly interested in a schedule of work based more on action than rhetoric, while not eliminating substantive discussions of issues of vital interest to the developing world.

67. The Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" would have little effect without its companion document on an agenda for development. Efforts should be made not only to achieve coherence and coordination within the United Nations system but also to provide adequate solutions to problems of development with the assistance of multilateral financial institutions.

68. In spite of the major progress that had been achieved in the international political arena, the problem of external debt continued to contribute to poverty and underdevelopment. External debt also caused political instability and posed a major obstacle to the advancement of democracy in many developing countries. Nicaragua's own debt amounted to more than 45 times its annual exports, and

(Mr. Vilchez Asher, Nicaragua)

unless its debt burden was very substantially alleviated the economic and social reconstruction of the country would become impossible.

69. In the transition from a centralized to a market economy, his Government had succeeded in reversing the eight-year decline in GDP to attain a modest growth of 0.7 per cent, but its efforts had been hampered by natural disasters and the decline in international prices of Nicaragua's main exports. Under Nicaragua's structural adjustment programme, the State monopoly of various sectors of the national economy had been abolished, privatization was being promoted and the annual inflation rate had fallen to 4 per cent for the first five months of 1993. More than 200 of the former 351 State enterprises had been privatized, while the production of a number of major crops, commodity trade and construction were entirely in private hands. While the challenge of privatization would continue, Nicaragua also faced the major challenge of promoting greater international understanding of the exceptional nature of its case, as recognized by General Assembly resolution 47/118, the provisions of which should be applied as it continued the difficult task of consolidating peace and making the transition to democracy. The social costs of adjustment had led to instability, which made it increasingly important to speed economic growth. Accordingly, the terms of aid to Nicaragua needed to be made more flexible, and increased external resources were required. In that context, he reiterated his Government's gratitude for the generous aid already received from Governments, United Nations agencies and financial institutions.

70. Peace and development were indivisible and interrelated and the disparities between the developed North and the impoverished South could not continue indefinitely. His delegation fully supported the efforts of the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to expand the North-South dialogue. In order to bring about that dialogue, it was necessary to promote a gradual convergence and make use of all international instruments that had been adopted in recent years. At the same time, efforts should be made to reach substantive agreements at the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit on Social Development.

71. In order for the developing countries to maintain their rate of growth, the industrialized countries must liberalize trade. His delegation was therefore concerned at the intensification of trade barriers, particularly with respect to agricultural products, and looked forward to the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

72. The effects of environmental pollution, which was principally due to the patterns of growth and consumption in the North, went beyond national frontiers. The countries of the North themselves suffered from the effects of environmental degradation, and they should acknowledge their responsibility to take measures to address the problem. The current session would provide a good opportunity to consider environmental problems, including the lack of sufficient financial resources, for the implementation of Agenda 21.

73. Mr. KARSLIOGLU (Turkey) said that the Committee should rationalize its work, concentrating on the solution of problems and taking concrete and decisive steps to alleviate their consequences. In particular, attention should be focused on the liberalization of world trade, the management of the debt crisis and the conservation of a sound environment.

74. His delegation attached great importance to concerted action at the global level to solve economic and social problems, and believed that a democratic society could thrive only in a peaceful environment and through cooperative partnership. Activities for development were just as important as peace-keeping operations; indeed, such activities, which included humanitarian assistance, constituted the foundation of peace and security.

75. Turkey welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The implementation of the goals of Agenda 21 would contribute to the protection of the environment for future generations. His delegation also attached great importance to the International Conference on Population and Development and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

76. Mr. CASSAR (Malta) said that, in an interrelated world, it would be presumptuous to expect an acceptable degree of development in the absence of a favourable international environment. In that regard, his delegation emphasized the importance of adopting an agenda for development.

77. In the light of the current international situation, Malta had consistently supported efforts to ensure respect for human rights and had supported the proposal to appoint a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, the violation of the right to life and a decent living could undermine all other efforts to generate respect for human rights in their entirety. No one could overlook the fact that 1.1 billion people were still living in extreme poverty and that thousands of children died daily as a result of malnutrition and lack of adequate medical care. In addition, millions of refugees were still living in the hope of returning to their homes.

78. His delegation hoped that the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would be concluded as soon as possible in order to create the positive trading relationship on which the economic progress of so many countries depended.

79. The implementation of Agenda 21 was of paramount importance. The effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should ensure equitable and sustainable development. His delegation was convinced that the Commission on Sustainable Development could produce results that could pave the way for international cooperation on certain environmental issues that had a direct influence on the economies of a number of States.

80. The issue of population growth was becoming increasingly urgent. An increasing world population in a depressed economic environment would result in a decline in living standards. His delegation hoped that the International Conference on Population and Development would contribute to the solution of the social and economic problems caused by high population growth.

(Mr. Cassar, Malta)

81. The United Nations was the Organization most capable of addressing global issues, particularly those that enhanced international development cooperation. The Organization must therefore do everything within its means to live up to those expectations. In that regard, the Secretary-General's efforts to restructure the Secretariat and introduce greater efficiency were commendable. The Committee had its share of responsibility in that process, and it should ensure that quality prevailed over quantity during its deliberations.

82. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon) said that the international economic environment was characterized by slow growth, excessive debt among developing countries and an increasingly pronounced marginalization of Africa. Realistic and durable solutions to those problems must be found. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had produced international solidarity in striving to promote sustainable development while ensuring sound environmental management. In response, Cameroon had accelerated the process of establishing a Ministry of the Environment and Forests. That new department, with UNDP assistance, was currently preparing a national environmental management plan, including the establishment of a national commission on sustainable development. While the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was welcome, it was regrettable that major provisions of Agenda 21 relating to financial resources and transfer of technology had not raised much enthusiasm.

83. The debt burden was becoming increasingly severe for developing countries. Measures taken thus far had given certain beneficiaries some breathing room, but the solution to the debt problem must be comprehensive, covering all categories of debt and of debtors. Therefore, his delegation supported the call for an international conference on debt. A fruitful exchange among creditors and debtors could lead to a lasting solution which would undoubtedly contribute to revitalization of the economies of developing countries, particularly in Africa.

84. Implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/151 establishing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was urgent. Despite those commitments, the financial resources necessary for the financing of African development were slow in coming, and the continent was still weighed down by the intolerable debt burden. Cameroon therefore appealed for the establishment of a fund to finance the development of Africa.

85. With regard to the restructuring of the economic, social and related sectors of the United Nations system, it was unfortunate that the issue of the composition of the UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA governing councils had not been resolved, and his delegation would join any effort towards consensus. Subsequent to the transfer of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) headquarters to Geneva, his delegation awaited with interest the appointment of a liaison officer to coordinate training and research activities currently under way at headquarters.

86. Mr. DUNLAVEY (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in his statement, the representative of Cuba had raised a number of points in explanation of his country's poor economic performance, among them the so-called economic embargo imposed by the United States. Yet it was the sovereign right of all Member States to determine with whom they would conduct economic relations. With regard to Cuba, the United States was in exercise of that sovereign right. Rather than attempting to score ideological points, the representative of Cuba should have sought ways of facilitating constructive debate.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.